

Message Text

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ACTION EA-09

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 SAM-01 SAJ-01 CU-02 CIAE-00 DODE-00

PM-04 H-02 INR-07 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01

SP-02 SS-15 USIA-06 /060 W
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R 080946Z MAR 76

FM AMCONSUL HONG KONG

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 9443

INFO USLO PEKING

AMEMBASSY SINGAPORE

AMEMBASSY TAIPEI

AMEMBASSY TOKYO

CINCPAC

C O N F I D E N T I A L HONG KONG 2649

NOFORN

CINCPAC FOR POLAD

E.O. 11652: XGDS-1

TAGS: PINT, CH

SUBJ: HONG KONG NCNA REPRESENTATIVE GIVES UNEXCITED VIEW OF
PRC CAMPAIGN

1. ON MARCH 3 I HAD A RATHER REVEALING TALK WITH LOCAL
HONG KONG NCNA DEPUTY DIRECTOR LI CHU-SHENG, REVEALING
BECAUSE OF THE UPBEAT RELAXED PRESENTATION. LI WENT INTO
GREAT DETAIL TO PORTRAY THE CURRENT DEBATE IN CHINA AS
A RATIONAL ACTIVITY, CHARACTERIZING IT AS A "NORMAL PROCESS"
OF THE CHINESE POLITICAL SYSTEM AND ONE WHICH SHOULD NOT
SURPRISE OUTSIDERS. LI STRESSED THAT THE UNIVERSITIES
WERE THE MAJOR FOCAL POINT OF DISCUSSION SINCE THE UNI-
VERSITIES WERE THE PLACES WHERE THE ISSUES WERE MOST RELE-
VANT AND WHERE THE VIGOROUS YOUNG COULD BE EXPECTED TO
EXERCISE THEIR CONSTITUTIONAL RIGHTS TO PUT UP BIG CHARACTER
POSTERS AND ENGAGE IN DEBATE.

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2. LI EVEN SUGGESTED THAT THERE COULD BE OTHERS WHO HOLD VIEWS OPPOSING THOSE MOST PROMINENTLY DISPLAYED IN THE MEDIA BUT, AT LEAST FOR THE TIME BEING, THEY WERE NOT GETTING PUBLICITY. HOWEVER, THEY HAD THE SAME PRIVILEGES AS THE CURRENT ACTIVISTS AND MIGHT BE HEARD FROM LATER. ANYWAY, THERE WAS GENERAL CALM IN CHINA OVER THE CAMPAIGN AND HE HOPED THAT PEKING DIPLOMATIC OBSERVERS WERE REPORTING THIS. I SAID THIS WAS MY IMPRESSION FROM REPORTS BY OUR MISSION THERE.

3. LI THOUGHT THAT IT WAS CERTAINLY TIME FOR THE FIFTH FIVE-YEAR PLAN TO BE ANNOUNCED AND MAINTAINED THAT THE REAL ISSUES CENTER ON THE PLAN AND WHO LEADS ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT IN GENERAL. HE WOULD NOT COMMENT ON THE POSSIBLE FATE OF TENG HSIAO-PING AND SAID THAT HE HAD NO IDEA HOW LONG THE CURRENT CAMPAIGN WOULD LAST, CASUALLY USING THE CHINESE FOR "WHO KNOWS?" NEVERTHELESS, IT WAS NOT A NEW CULTURAL REVOLUTION, INSTEAD THE CULTURAL REVOLUTION ACCORDING TO MAO WAS ONLY A PART OF A CONTINUING PROCESS AND CRITICISM AND DEBATE WERE ESSENTIAL TO THE PROCESS.

4. COMMENT: LI, THE SECOND-RANKED MAN IN PEKING'S NCNA SET-UP HERE, IS THE VIRTUAL TOP MAN GIVEN THE FRAIL HEALTH OF NCNA DIRECTOR LIANG WEI-LIN. LI'S DELIBERATELY UNCONCERNED APPROACH AND BLAND EXPOSITION WAS IN MARKED CONTRAST TO THE QUITE APPARENT ANXIETY OF HIS INTERPRETER AND COMPANION LI JOH-HO, AN UNAPPEALING, HARD-LINING YOUNG MAN WHO WAS NERVOUS THROUGHOUT THE CONVERSATION AND WHO FINALLY SUCCEEDED IN LEADING HIS BOSS AWAY. WHAT JOH-HO WAS WORRIED ABOUT IS UNCLEAR,. IT MAY HAVE BEEN THAT THE YOUNGER MAN DID NOT LIKE TO SEE A MAJOR ATTACK ON REVISIONISM AND "CAPITALIST ROADERS" REDUCED TO A ROUTINE POLITICAL PROCEDURE BY THE OLDER GENERATION. IN THAT CASE, BOTH GENTLEMEN MAY HAVE BEEN DISPLAYING GENERATIONAL ATTITUDES COMMON IN CHINA THESE DAYS.
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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 JAN 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: POLITICAL STABILITY, PROPAGANDA, ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT, PERSONAL OPINION, DIPLOMATIC DISCUSSIONS, FIVE YEAR PLAN, POLITICAL SITUATION
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 08 MAR 1976
Decaption Date: 01 JAN 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Authority: KelleyW0
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 28 MAY 2004
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1976HONGK02649
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: TEXT ON MICROFILM ALSO
Executive Order: X1
Errors: N/A
Film Number: D760087-0319, P760037-1042
From: HONG KONG
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1976/newtext/t19760385/aaaacwzf.tel
Line Count: 96
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Office: ACTION EA
Original Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: NOFORN
Page Count: 2
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Previous Handling Restrictions: NOFORN
Reference: n/a
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Authority: KelleyW0
Review Comment: n/a
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 21 MAY 2004
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review History: RELEASED <21 MAY 2004 by ShawDG>; APPROVED <20 SEP 2004 by KelleyW0>
Review Markings:

Margaret P. Grafeld
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
04 MAY 2006

Review Media Identifier:
Review Referrals: n/a
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: HONG KONG NCNA REPRESENTATIVE GIVES UNEXCITED VIEW OF PRC CAMPAIGN
TAGS: PINT, CH, NCNA, (LI CHU-SHENG)
To: STATE
Type: TE
Markings: Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 04 MAY 2006